

JOBS NOW

Gov't must bail out workers, not the rich

By Fred Goldstein

Community organizers, trade unionists and activists from all over the country are going to Pittsburgh for a week of demonstrations Sept. 20 through Sept. 26. They'll be protesting the gathering of the G-20 governments, who are convening to discuss how best to bolster the profits of global capital.

The G-20 meeting takes place against a backdrop of growing unemployment, poverty and homelessness, a mounting U.S. health care crisis, escalation of the U.S.-NATO aggression in Afghanistan and corporate devastation of the environment. Protests throughout the week will target the economic crisis, the environmental crisis, war, health care and other issues.

A key demonstration is the March for Jobs in solidarity with the unemployed, which will take place on Sept. 20. It will go from the Monumental Baptist Church, in the historic Hill district in the African-American community, to Freedom Corner, a symbol of the civil rights movement and the struggle against racism in Pittsburgh. The demonstration will return to Monumental Baptist to a "Bail Out the Unemployed" tent city.

The March for Jobs, initiated by

the Bail Out the People Movement, is endorsed by organizations and prominent individuals across the country, including the United Steelworkers and the United Electrical Workers union, both of whom have their national offices in Pittsburgh.

Key to the success of the mobilization has been the Rev. Thomas Smith, pastor of the Monumental Baptist Church. The Rev. Smith lent the facilities and grounds of the church to the March for Jobs and the tent city. The Rev. Smith is also president of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization.

Raising the voice of the unemployed

The March for Jobs is meant to raise the voice of the unemployed to be heard above the cries of "recovery" being heard

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WORKERS WORLD STATEMENT

IN PITTSBURGH

Fight racism, build unity!

WORKERS WORLD PARTY and newspaper endorse and are actively helping to build the Jobs March to take place in Pittsburgh on Sept. 20, as well as the Tent City that follows.

Why is this march, which begins in the historically African-American section of a city that once was the steel center of the United States, so important?

Just look at the official unemployment figures. Although they minimize

the drastic situation for the working class by not counting part-time and "discouraged" workers, they nevertheless map the trends from month to month.

In August, the overall jobless rate continued to rise, even as the experts were talking of an economic rebound. It reached 9.7 percent, showing that this jobless recovery, while it is putting hefty profits into the pockets of the rich, means little for tens of millions of workers and their families.

Among Black workers, however, the jobless level soared to more than 15 percent in August. Racism in hiring and firing continues to raise its ugly head, despite the Obama election victory.

White workers are now feeling the

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The Mellons: Deindustrializing Pittsburgh

By Stephen Millies

Pittsburgh has shriveled. The former center of U.S. heavy industry has seen its population drop from 676,000 in 1950 to 310,000 in 2008. More people lived there in 1900.

So why are big shots from 20 countries—the G-20—meeting in Pittsburgh? The ruling class fears big demonstrations would erupt if the G-20 met in New York City or Washington, D.C.

Listen up billionaires. People will be marching in Pittsburgh for jobs and health care and against your wars in Iraq and Afghanistan no matter how many cops are mobilized.

The wealthy elite also chose Pittsburgh because they consider the hometown of the Mellon financial dynasty to be a shining example of a “post-industrial” city.

The Mellons and other billionaires destroyed over 110,000 manufacturing jobs in the area. Forty thousand factory jobs have been lost in the last 10 years alone.

The Pittsburgh Steelers have won six Super Bowls but the last big local mill is U.S. Steel’s Edgar Thomson Works, which Andrew Carnegie started in 1875. What had been known as the steel capital of the world shed 56,000 steel jobs.

Pittsburgh was also the center of the Westinghouse electrical empire. Thousands of jobs were lost at its former plants in East Pittsburgh.

The Mellons’ fingerprints are all over this crime. After the 1907 financial crisis they pushed out George Westinghouse and took a big slice of the electrical giant. Then the Mellons let the Westinghouse Corp. bleed to death for years until its remnants were bought by Siemens.

The gleaming skyscrapers of Pittsburgh’s “Golden Triangle” are matched by low wages.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Pittsburgh area’s 30,770 cashiers earned an average \$8.69 per hour in 2008. The 43,240 local retail salespersons fared a little better—their average hourly wages were \$11.60.

The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center employs 50,000 workers, five times the local employment of U.S. Steel. Health care workers in Pittsburgh earn less compared to almost any other Northern metropolitan area.

Exposing two big lies

Millions of workers throughout the U.S. have had their jobs stolen by big business. If a fired worker was fortunate to find a new job, it usually paid less than their old position.

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World including Larry Holmes, LeiLani Dowell, Saladin Muhammad, John Parker, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Larry Hales, Imani Henry and edited by Monica Moorehead.

www.Leftbooks.com

PART 7

A big lie used to divide poor and working people is to blame African Americans for the economic decline of cities like Detroit and Cleveland.

Pittsburgh’s 110,000 lost manufacturing jobs were taken from a city with a white majority. After World War II, the Mellons and their elected stooges made sure that Pittsburgh’s Black community grew the slowest of any in the North.

Pittsburgh also exposes the poisonous lie that “immigrants steal jobs.”

A century ago, when Pittsburgh was the steel capital of the world, one out of every four residents was born in another country. Deindustrialized Pittsburgh has today one of the smallest immigrant populations of any metropolitan area.

Just as the Mellons used “urban renewal” programs to tear down part of The Hill in Pittsburgh—a historic Black community—they’ve also kept the Latino/a community small as compared to other big cities in the North.

Fight for every job

The Mellons controlled a whole slew of industrial corporations and utilities. They’ve cut loose some of their former crown jewels. These included the Koppers Corp., a coke and chemical combine, and Carborundum, a big manufacturer of industrial abrasives.

The huge investment needed to automate not only kills manufacturing jobs. As Karl Marx showed, it also tends to lower the average rate of profit.

Even if a capitalist is getting more profits from a super-automated factory, these profits are probably going to be a lower percentage of the required increased investment.

Big capitalists try to break out of this cycle by reaping superprofits from wars and “defense” contracts.

They also cut their losses by axing outfits like Mesta Machine Works. Mesta was one of the world’s largest makers of steel mill equipment.

Even though Mesta was a Mellon outfit, the Mellon Bank foreclosed on it in February 1983. The 1,200 workers fired at Mesta’s Homestead, Pa., plant put up a struggle and finally got their back pay.

The following year Jesse Jackson won the Democratic primary in Homestead, a city that was 75 percent white.

Key to Jackson’s triumph was the support of two white union leaders: Ron Weisen, president of United Steelworkers Local 1371 and Darrell Becker, president of Shipbuilders Local 61. Fourteen hundred of these union members had been on strike against the Dravo Shipbuilding Corp. for seven months.

Steve Kirschbaum—a leader of Boston’s school bus drivers, members of United Steelworkers Local 8751—helped organize Jackson’s rally at Dravo’s picket lines. Gavrielle Gemma, currently an organizer for the Bail Out the People Movement, was on the platform with Jesse Jackson, representing Labor for Jackson.

Jesse Jackson told these strikers: “Mellon and the bankers have to stop investing in [then apartheid] South Africa and subsidizing slave labor. They’ve got to start investing in this steel valley of antiquated steel plants and shutdown plants. They owe it to you. If they refuse, you have the option of running them yourselves.” (Workers World, April 19, 1984)

The Rev. Jackson’s advice is still good today. It’s our plants and offices—not the Mellons’ or any other billionaire family’s.

Last of a series.

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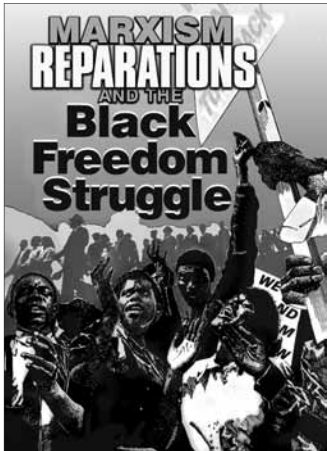
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A visit with Mumia Abu-Jamal

Special to Workers World
Waynesburg, Pa.

Monica Moorehead and Larry Holmes, Workers World Party secretariat members, and Larry Hales, a national leader of Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST), traveled to Waynesburg, Pa., Sept. 13 to visit political prisoner and revolutionary journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, who is on death row at the State Correctional Institution-Greene Unit.

Abu-Jamal's spirits were very high. It is the first time Party members met with him

without him having to wear handcuffs.

The four-hour meeting with Abu-Jamal, known as “the voice of the voiceless,” included such topics as the racist, right-wing attacks on the Obama administration; the growing capitalist economic crisis here and worldwide; the role of Black culture in the struggle; and the current letter and petition campaign to demand that the U.S. Department of Justice conduct a federal investigation into civil rights violations against Abu-Jamal. These gross violations have led to Abu-Jamal being unjustly sentenced to

death row for the past 27 years.

A lively exchange of information and analysis was had with Abu-Jamal regarding the upcoming Bail Out the People Movement March for Jobs and Tent City for the unemployed, leading up to the G-20 summit in Pittsburgh from Sept. 20 to 25. A program on Abu-Jamal's case is scheduled during the Tent City, which is being held in “The Hill,” an historic section of Pittsburgh's Black community. For more information, go to www.bailoutpeople.org. To listen to Abu-Jamal's audio commentaries, go to www.prisonradio.org. □



Racist Sheriff Arpaio greeted by angry, militant protest

Loud shouts of “Racists go home!” greeted Arizona's Maricopa County sheriff, Joe Arpaio, and his cronies as he entered the Marriott Hotel for an event to promote his new book, “Joe's Law.” Hundreds militantly protested outside for hours, despite

a large Houston police presence and a counterprotest by U.S. Border Watch.

Inside, the event was disrupted by four protesters, one of whom paid the \$30 entrance fee and stood in line to get Arpaio's autograph. When she got to the front of the line, Liliana, a Colombian immigrant, handed Arpaio a certificate and loudly proclaimed, “I am here to present to you the Bull Connor Award for your promotion of racial discrimination, disregard of human rights, abuse of power and general hatred of the ‘other.’ You are a racist and a criminal!” Connor was the infamous Alabama police commissioner and Ku Klux Klan member who used attack dogs and fire hoses on African Americans in the 1960s.

HOUSTON



—Report and photos by Gloria Rubac

Harvard community protests racist attacks on worker

By Phebe Eckfeldt
Cambridge, Mass.

A strong, multinational, anti-racist picket of Harvard University workers, students and community supporters took place Sept. 3 outside of the Harvard-MIT Data Center. The 40 pickets were assembled to show support for Ravi Raj, a worker there who has been under racist attack by his bosses for several years. Angry chants of “Ravi Raj under attack! What do we do? Stand up! Fight back!” and “No discrimination and no retaliation!” were heard by his supervisors and other workers, who could be seen looking out the upstairs windows. The morning of the picket, an e-mail

had been sent to Raj's co-workers warning them not to talk to any press.

Raj is an immigrant from India who has endured racial slurs directed against him and members of his family. A flyer handed out about his case says: “Ravi has been called racist names, had his office taken away, was told at one point he was fired, and has had food dumped on his desk. He has been passed over for promotion, has been discouraged from participating in social events at work, and has received mediocre evaluations despite very high production and many compliments from colleagues. ...

“On April 24, Ravi had a meeting set up with administrators to challenge unfair

criticism of his performance and make a formal complaint of racial discrimination. Just a few hours before the meeting, someone Ravi had never seen before confronted him at work, called him by name, told him he had taken ‘the wrong path’ and should ‘watch out.’ When Ravi asked the man's name, he was told, ‘call me X,’ and ‘You'll learn my name soon.’ Management was informed that Ravi reported this incident to the police. On April 27, Ravi got an anonymous phone call from someone asking, ‘How did the police report go?’”

Working with his union representative from the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees

Local 3650, Raj has filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board and the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.

Greeted with cheers of support when introduced at the picket rally, Raj vowed to continue to fight. Speakers from the Harvard University No Layoffs Campaign, the HUCTW, the Student Labor Action Movement, Service Employees union Local 285, UNITE/HERE, the Women's Fightback Network, the Bail Out the People Movement and Socialist Action all condemned Harvard's racism and attempts to divide workers while carrying out layoffs, cutbacks, and speed ups. “We'll be back! We'll be back!” shouted the protesters. □

Economic crisis devastates students

By Julie Fry

Excerpted from an article in the inaugural issue of Left Hook, a newspaper produced by the youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—FIST. Visit www.fistyouth.org.

Students face a devastating new reality. Along with the usual back-to-school jitters, students across the country must cope with massive budget cuts, higher tuition rates and decreased financial aid. Those students who manage to scrape together the extra funds necessary to graduate face a terribly bleak job market when they leave their campuses.

Faced with tens of billions of dollars in budget deficits, most states have cut deep into their education spending to cover other costs. Thirty-five states have already cut higher education spending and/or increased tuition. The cuts have been particularly hard on students of col-

or, who disproportionately rely on state universities and community colleges for access to higher education.

The effects of these cuts are startling. In California, a state that almost went bankrupt this year from its huge budget deficits, state funding to all levels of education has been cut by billions of dollars. The cuts mean fewer teachers, bigger classrooms and school closings all over the state. For many college students, the cuts put higher education practically out of reach. Once considered a national model for publicly funded higher education, the University of California and California State University systems are raising tuition and student fees, cutting classes, furloughing professors and enrolling thousands fewer students to compensate for the state-imposed cuts.

The California State University system—the largest four-year university system in the country—plans to cut

enrollment by 40,000 students over the next two years and raise student fees by 32 percent. The California Community College system is raising fees by 30 percent and slashing course offerings. The Los Angeles County Community College District canceled its entire summer session this year. Other colleges are cutting hundreds of courses.

As Chris Morales, a Cal State University student who is the first in his family to go to college, told the Associated Press: “The fee increase is going to be tough for me and other students because it's hard for students to get jobs. ... My mother doesn't make enough money to pay for my college education. She has three other children.” (Aug. 5)

Morales faces the same reality as millions of others starting this school year with an increasingly unaffordable and inaccessible system of higher education, and little hope of finding a job in an econ-

omy where the official unemployment rate is in double digits in many areas. For youth aged 16-19 years old who are seeking work, the official unemployment rate is more than 20 percent.

Even financial aid and student loans, often relied on by students to overcome the astronomical cost of a college education, are becoming scarce. Since March of 2008, more than 100 lenders have suspended their participation in federally backed fixed-rate student loan programs—programs that typically provide low-interest loans to students. Many states have drastically cut or completely shut down their student loan and grant programs, taking away billions of dollars in aid.

What can students do?

Many students are wondering whether these cuts in public education funding

Continued on page 5

Solidarity, militancy lead to win for professors

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Rochester, Mich.

After five days on strike, the 600-member chapter of the American Association of University Professors at Oakland University agreed to a tentative settlement on Sept. 10. OU has approximately 18,000 enrolled undergraduate and graduate students and is located about 25 miles north of Detroit.

Because of the AAUP's steadfast resistance to horrendous concessions, bolstered by massive labor, community and student support, the union was able to reach a tentative agreement that rejects the majority of the worst administrative proposals.

"We're marching to protect the quality of our students' education and the value of their degrees. It's a mistake to think that professors are motivated only by money; we have gone into the profession because we love to teach and we love to learn. We merely want to create an environment that will provide the next generation with a first-rate education," wrote Kathleen Pfeiffer, OU associate professor of English, in a letter to local media Sept. 10.

The tentative three-year contract agreement includes a limit on the use of non-tenure/part-time faculty, protection of faculty members' intellectual property,

and options for two health care plans. Professors will receive no pay raises this year, 1 percent in the second year and 3 percent in the third year, and give up two days of pay. Originally the administration wanted no pay raises and wanted to dock the professors' pay for the days they were on strike.

In regard to one of the main strike issues, the union kept its right to faculty governance, which contractually binds the administration to adhere to the union's input for the curriculum, how classes are taught and other educational matters.

There will be union meetings to discuss the tentative agreement over the next two weeks and then a vote by members will take place.

Solidarity Forever!

Until the Sept. 3 strike began, the union and the OU administration had been bargaining since May. The administration was intent on forcing through no pay raises, gutting the faculty governance process, increasing the number of non-tenure/part-time faculty and increasing health care costs among other concessions and grave precedents.

The administration thought that because of the economic depression in Michigan they could count on the stu-

dents and the public to attack the union. They miscalculated. The great majority of students—Black, Latino/a, Asian and white—are in solidarity with their professors. Other poor and working people were happy to see their fellow workers standing up to their bosses instead of meekly taking concessions without a fight.

Students in particular were the decisive reason why the union was able to hold on—and why, by the third day of the strike, the administration sought an injunction from the courts to force the union back to work. The administration knew they were losing badly on the picket line and in the public eye. While students had just been hammered by a 9 percent tuition increase, reports surfaced that the administration is sitting on millions in "surplus" funds and that the university president had just received a \$100,000 raise, increasing his salary to \$350,000. Because of the public support for the AAUP, when the union and the administration went to court, a judge ordered the two sides to bargain round-the-clock until an agreement was reached instead of issuing an immediate injunction.

Students were on the picket lines at all entrances to the university and came out in the hundreds at two rallies. At one rally, in a rain downpour, they sang "Solidarity

Forever" while marching around the administration building. They also made support T-shirts and distributed leaflets, started Facebook pages in support of their professors and much more.

The union also received strong and widespread support from labor and the community. The Teamsters refused to cross the picket lines.

At a support rally on campus on Sept. 8 Bonnie Halloran, president of the Lecturers Employee Organization-American Federation of Teachers, said: "We are 1,500 nontenured lecturers at the University of Michigan campuses at Dearborn, Ann Arbor and Flint. We are in full solidarity." Other AFT locals such as the Union of Part-Time Faculty, the Graduate Employee Organizing Committee, AAUP at Wayne State University and the Adjunct Faculty Organization at Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn helped support the strike on the picket line and elsewhere. The AFT also provided national support.

The union also received critical support from other OU unions that have been working without a contract for months. The AAUP intends to support its sisters and brothers in their contract fights as well.

Bryan G. Pfeifer is the staff organizer with the UPTF-AFT at Wayne State University in Detroit.

From new intro to 'High Tech, Low Pay'

Capitalist impasse and socialist future

Following is the sixth and final part of an excerpt from the introduction by Fred Goldstein to an upcoming reprint of the ground-breaking work "High Tech, Low Pay," which was written by Sam Marcy in 1986, during the early stages of capitalist restructuring. Goldstein is the author of "Low-Wage Capitalism: Colossus with Feet of Clay." Read parts one through five in the Aug. 13, Aug. 20, Aug. 27, Sept. 3 and Sept. 10 issues of WW.

The days when the conservative labor leadership has been able to hold the working class in check are numbered. Its base is shrinking with each round of concessions it makes to the bosses, with each sweet-heart contract it signs. As Marcy noted, at the beginning of each crisis the workers are thrown back onto the defensive. But sooner or later they will cry "Enough is enough!" Then the tide will turn.

There is no bourgeois economist who can see ahead past one quarter. Yet Marcy's analysis of 25 years ago, proceeding from Marxist theory, put a sharp focus on trends deep within the organism of capitalism and outlined the forces that have shaped the present.

The inevitable imbalance between production and consumption has finally led to a protracted and profound crisis of overproduction. This is certainly the worst crisis in the post-World War II era. As of June 2009, it has lasted the longest—19 months. The measures taken by the world capitalist class to overcome it are by far the greatest. It follows two previous job-less recoveries, the second far more pronounced than the first, which were only overcome by extraordinary, nonreproducible measures (expansion in the wake of the collapse of the USSR, massive bubble-creating measures in the dot-com and housing markets).

Even the most optimistic bourgeois economists concede that a recovery of capitalist production would still leave

massive unemployment, as the system will be unable to reabsorb a large proportion of the workers laid off in the present crisis.

Furthermore, in the era of imperialism and the scientific-technological revolution, each round of new technological innovation by the ruling class makes it more and more difficult to start the capitalist system up again after a bust. The two most important reasons are that technology reduces the skills and buying power of the workers, while at the same time increasing productivity, thus insuring that production saturates the markets at a faster and faster rate.

The question that remains for the working class is whether or not quantity has turned into quality in the matter of the capitalist recovery—that is, whether or not the scientific-technological revolution and its effects, so profoundly analyzed by Marcy, have brought capitalism to the point where society will not be able to go forward. Has the profit system reached an impasse?

Because of the previous period of expansive globalization of capital, this crisis is the most far-reaching in terms of the numbers of workers affected. The world socialization of the production process has been brought to an extraordinarily high level. Private property is becoming a more and more intolerable brake internationally.

The ruling class is trying to shift this crisis entirely onto the backs of the workers and the oppressed, just as it did during the Great Depression.

Many are promoting the notion that crisis automatically leads to uprisings and the collapse of capitalism. This is sterile, abstract thinking, far removed from the reality of the working class. It fails to take into account the disintegrating forces exerted upon the workers by a capitalist crisis of unemployment. The workers become atomized and lose the sense of strength derived from being together on

the job. Their sense of confidence and of their potential power is undermined by a crisis.

It takes great efforts by working-class leaders to find strategies and tactics to counteract the effects of the downturn, develop methods of resistance to every attack and take advantage of every upturn in the economic situation to push the struggle forward onto the offensive.

This was the principal purpose of "High Tech, Low Pay" and of much of Marcy's life work, for that matter.

Marxism has no crystal ball. It does not dole out prescriptive formulas for how a major, global capitalist crisis of profound dimensions will play itself out.

Capitalism experienced a global economic collapse during the Great Depression. A decade of mass unemployment ensued that could not be overcome except by rearmament in the U.S. and Europe and ultimately war. Thus the manifestation of

the absolute, general crisis of capitalism has been economic collapse. This variant must be taken seriously. But the possibility of a protracted period of weak and short-lived recoveries alongside growing and irreversible mass unemployment must also be considered. There could be a temporary delay in a sharp crisis as a result of massive financial manipulation and capitalist state intervention. However, that it could end either in collapse or war or both must also be considered.

The precise, immediate future cannot be known. What is known is that genuine working-class leaders must prepare for struggle and adapt to any eventuality to assist the workers in dealing with the crisis, whatever form it takes. Above all, the working class must rise to assume its historic destiny as the subject of history and lead the way out of the state of permanent crisis, into which capitalism has led humanity, towards a socialist future. □

World View Forum has just reissued this classic work by Sam Marcy, Workers World Party founder.

As wages fall and unemployment rises, this book rings as true today as when it was first published in 1986. Marcy explained how the high-tech revolution was destroying high-paying jobs while changing the social composition of the working class, bringing more of the oppressed into workplaces, raising the potential for more solidarity and struggle. Marcy's analysis, strategies and tactics are still on-target.

A new introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of "Low-Wage Capitalism," explains the roots of the current economic crisis, with its disastrous unemployment, which has heightened the need for a working-class resurgence.

"High Tech, Low Pay," is a must-read for working people—employed and unemployed, organized and unorganized, and activists nationwide.

Special Offer for March for Jobs and Tent City

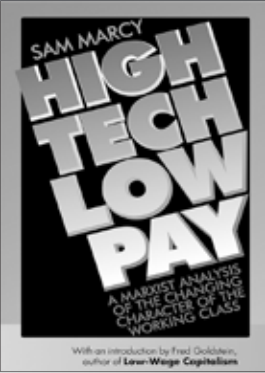
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ON THE PICKET LINE

by Sue Davis

Hilton hotel workers' contract fight

Chanting, "No contract, no peace!" workers at Hilton Crystal City Hotel in northern Virginia, who have been fighting for a fair contract for more than two years, put teeth into Labor Day by demonstrating at the hotel on Sept. 11. Their call for a hotel boycott got an impressive show of solidarity when the Teachers Union Reform Network cancelled 600 rooms for a three-day event. Represented by UNITE HERE Local 25, the workers risked arrest, as did 12 members who blocked traffic in front of the hotel on June 20. "We're very thankful for the community's continued support and we're going to walk the line until we win," hotel engineer Rafael Cruz told Union City, the online newsletter of Metro Washington Council AFL-CIO. (Sept. 14)

Fla. tomato grower signs with CIW

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers scored a major win when the East Coast Growers and Packers dropped out of the anti-worker Florida Tomato Growers Exchange and agreed to adopt CIW's Fair Food agreement, which includes a penny-per-pound raise to harvesters and a stringent pro-worker code of conduct. The raise gives the harvesters, who are predominantly Latinos/as and African Americans, a 62 per cent per-bucket raise from 50 to 82 cents. This win adds to CIW's impressive list of hard-fought-for-and-won employers: Taco Bell, McDonald's, Burger King, Subway and Whole Foods. (Some groups are boycotting anti-union WF because its owner is against health care reform.)

CIW is now targeting major grocery chains like Publix and Kroger and national big-box chains like Costco and Wal-Mart. CIW rolled out its campaign targeting Publix (which Forbes ranked 10th in its 2008 list of largest private companies and Florida's largest) with a Labor Day Freedom Ride bike tour in Sarasota, Fla. WMNF, Tampa's community radio station in the Pacifica network, honored CIW with the 2009 WMNF Peace and Justice Award on Sept. 5.

500 groups demand end to immigration police program

A coalition of 500 advocacy groups sent President Obama a letter the week of Aug. 24 demanding the administration end the 287(g) program, which deputizes police to turn over suspects to immigration authorities for possible deportation. The letter, sent by the National Immigration Law Center and signed by groups like the National Day Laborers Organizing Network, noted, "Racial profiling and other civil rights abuses by the local law enforcement agencies that have sought out 287(g) powers have compromised public safety, while doing nothing to solve the immigration crisis."

NWU denounces Google's violation of writers' rights

"Google's book scanning project is one of the largest cases of copyright infringement since the United States Constitution was adopted in 1789," said Larry Goldbetter, president of the National Writers Union, United Auto Workers Local 1981. "The multibillion-dollar corporation scanned more than seven million different books without permission from the copyright owners. In an attempt to placate its victims, Google is throwing some crumbs to writers." (Reuters, Sept. 4) The NWU pointed out that Google, whose gross profit in 2008 was \$4.5 billion, is offering writers as little as \$60 per infringed book and \$15 per infringed article. □

Stella D'Oro workers say, 'WE WILL NOT BE MOVED'

By Mike Eilenfeldt
New York

Chanting, "Whose factory? Our factory!" a strong contingent of Stella D'Oro workers and hundreds of supporters transformed the annual New York City Labor Day celebration on Sept. 12 into a militant march. "Keep Stella D'Oro in the Bronx!" resonated with thousands of parading working-class rank-and-file union members. Wave upon wave of workers chanted and raised fists in solidarity as they passed by the Stella D'Oro contingent, which stopped at 70th Street and Fifth Avenue. Spirits were lifted.

Stella D'Oro workers marched with two huge red banners from Guatemala, created in tribute to their struggle. They were joined by the Stella D'Oro Support Committee, the Bail Out the People Movement, the May 1st Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights, Domestic Workers United, workers from International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 3 and members of the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York, including PSC President Barbara Bowen. The PSC collected signatures on a petition to New York City Mayor Bloomberg. Leaflets announcing a national March for Jobs on Sept. 20 in Pittsburgh were distributed.

Sara Rodriguez led the Stella D'Oro delegation with the chant, "¡Obreros unidos jamás serán vencidos!" (The workers united will never be defeated.) She told Workers World: "We still have faith. We're here today to keep fighting. We deserve to have a better life."

Predictions of rain failed to dampen the momentum gathering behind the seasoned members of Bakery Workers union Local 50. Their successful 11-month strike against Brynwood Partners—a predatory, profit-driven, racist vulture—forged 136 Stella D'Oro sisters and brothers into a spearhead of fightback to keep the plant in the Bronx. On July 1, Administrative Law Judge Steven Davis of the National Labor Relations Board ruled that Brynwood had committed unfair labor practices against Local 50 and ordered it to reinstate the workers with back pay and bargain with the union under their previous contract. Brynwood illegally ignored the ruling and began proceedings to close the plant or sell it and move it out of the Bronx.

Local 50 responded by seeking an injunction to stop the sale. Under Section 10(j) of the National Labor Relations Act, a petition for injunctive relief is appropriate and should be

Rainbow Solidarity in defense of CUBA



A compilation of articles by Leslie Feinberg from the Lavender & Red series in Workers World newspaper, shows how the Cuban Revolution has worked to overturn prejudice against same-sex love inherited from the colonial and imperial eras. The book shows the Cuban Revolution's trajectory of progress in hard facts. It's a must-read to understand the revolutionary process required to uproot prejudice.

www.Leftbooks.org



WW PHOTO: MIKE EILENFELDT

Union worker cheers in solidarity as she marches past the Stella D'Oro contingent at N.Y. Labor Day Parade, Sept. 12.

promptly acted upon when irreparable harm is imposed on the union. Yet the NLRB Litigation Branch has not acted on the petition, which was filed two months ago by the union.

On Sept. 8, days before the parade, Lance Inc., a nonunion snack producer based in Charlotte, N.C., announced that they would buy Stella D'Oro—stealing the company's legendary name—dismantle the Bronx plant and move some of the equipment to Ashland, Ohio. North Carolina is a so-called "right-to-work," meaning anti-union, state.

Ownership of Stella D'Oro

The city of New York has a stake as to whether Brynwood can move the plant out of the Bronx. In 2006, when Brynwood bought the plant, the city granted this private equity vulture more than a million dollars to buy new machinery and equipment to keep them in the city. Brynwood also inherited \$9 million in tax relief from Kraft Corp., the previous owners.

Furthermore, the Stella D'Oro workers are the principal creditors. The equity from their labor, pensions, severance and back pay entitles them to decide

the future of the company. That plant belongs to the Stella D'Oro workers and the New York City taxpayers.

What an outrage! Corporate criminals in Connecticut plan to strip out the guts of a 75-year-old Bronx institution, wreaking havoc on the lives of hundreds of human beings in our community. Strike leader in the 11-month victory, George Kahsaay, reflected that mood when he said, "We made Stella D'Oro." Thrilling exchanges between chanting Stella D'Oro workers and the many thousands of union sisters and brothers parading past them continued for hours until Oscar Hernandez, one of the main leaders during the strike, was the last one remaining. He held a placard which read, "Keep Stella D'Oro in the Bronx."

A radio reporter cynically asked Mike Filippou, Local 50 Executive Committee member, strike leader and main spokesperson, what kind of work he will be looking for. Filipou responded: "My job is here. I'm gonna stay here. I'm gonna fight."

A victory for Stella D'Oro will be a victory for all workers.

Eilenfeldt is a member of the Bail Out the People Movement and a New York Central Labor Council delegate.

Economic crisis devastates students

Continued from page 3

are as necessary and inevitable as many politicians claim. How is it that the federal government was able to come up with trillions of dollars to bail out failed banks, while refusing to offer just the few billion dollars it would take to shore up the country's needy higher education institutions? As students return to their more expensive, less functional campuses, they are wondering why they are being forced to pay the price for the economic crisis caused by the world's largest banks.

Some students have already begun to create fight-back strategies. At the City University of New York—a school that endured millions of dollars in cuts in this year's state budget—students joined with professors to protest the attacks against their school last spring. Hundreds of CUNY students participated in demonstrations and walk-outs against the proposed state budget, and more actions are planned for this school year. FIST is an active participant in the CUNY Campaign to Defend Education, which fights for an immediate rollback of all tuition hikes and for open admissions and free tuition at all CUNY campuses.

Students will be joining with work-

ers in Pittsburgh during the week of Sept. 20 to protest the G-20 summit—a gathering of the leaders of the world's wealthiest nations, who are meeting to decide how to further protect banks and corporations during the economic crisis, with no discussion of how to protect students or workers.

Organizers of the protest against the G-20 are planning a March for Jobs on Sunday, Sept. 20, to demand a jobs program at a living wage. This is a critical demand for students who more and more face increased debt and diminished job prospects upon graduation. The Bail Out the People Movement (of which FIST is a member) is planning an entire week of activities during the G-20, all in support of a people's agenda that would prioritize demands such as canceling student debt, rolling back tuition hikes and cutbacks, a national jobs program and other important needs.

Organizers of the demonstrations see the G-20 protests as the start of a national struggle to unite workers and students and demand that the bail-out money for the banks be used for a people's agenda that will make jobs and education a priority. □

Obama’s speech

Health care debate & the racist connection

By David Hoskins

President Obama addressed a joint session of Congress on Sept. 9 in a forceful attempt to revive the Democratic health bill. Obama’s speech came after weeks of racist attacks at town hall forums around the country, combined with demagoguery and distortions from right-wing politicians and commentators, that threatened to entirely sink any reform and forced Democrats to retreat from a “public option.”

Two forces were at work behind the attacks and distortions. The health insurance industry demonstrated its determination to defeat any type of reform—even incremental, contradictory and insufficient reform—that could potentially threaten just a miniscule portion of their multibillion-dollar profits. Meanwhile, in an attempt to avert a united, multinational working-class struggle against the economic crisis, a section of the ruling class has exposed its willingness to whip up racist reaction by positioning Obama as the fall guy for the worst crisis since the Great Depression.

Obama spells out Democratic priorities

In sometimes soaring language, Obama described the plight of the uninsured and underinsured who struggle daily for basic care in the richest country on earth. With strong words, Obama accurately described the spectacle of scare tactics and dishonest debate, the shortsighted political posturing and the general reign of confusion that has surrounded the push for health care reform.

It was only when Obama turned his attention to the details of what a Democratic health reform bill would look like that it became clear something was amiss. He described a plan similar to that which has already passed four committees in the Democratic-controlled Congress. In doing so the administration threw its support behind a woefully inadequate plan that would cost \$900 billion over 10 years, force individuals without coverage to purchase health insurance, and restrict the option for public coverage to less than 5 percent of the population. The Congressional Budget Office previously estimated that this type of reform would ultimately leave 17 million uninsured.

In his speech, Obama made clear that the Democratic health plan does not provide coverage to undocumented workers and provides no federal funding for abortion services. This unfortunate position on the medical rights of women and immigrants comes at a time when Obama himself is under attack from an extreme right wing which has sought to use racism against him to undermine even the slightest chance of reform.

Racist outburst during President’s speech

South Carolina Republican Rep. Joe Wilson attempted to shout down Obama by yelling, “You lie!” as the president assured Congress that the undocumented would not receive coverage. The very fact that Obama felt compelled to emphasize the exclusion of undocumented immigrants is a testament to the viciously racist

Washington atmosphere.

Wilson’s outburst reflects that racism. New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd called out Wilson and the racist establishment in her Sept. 12 column: “Surrounded by middle-aged white guys—a sepia snapshot of the days when such pols ran Washington like their own men’s club—Joe Wilson yelled ‘You lie!’ at a president who didn’t. But, fair or not, what I heard was an unspoken word in the air: You lie, boy!”

Dowd goes on to explain how Wilson belonged to the Sons of Confederate Veterans and led a campaign to keep the Confederate flag above the South Carolina state Capitol in 2000. Wilson’s reactionary credentials are not in doubt, and Dowd was right on target in her assertion that his outburst was laced with racism.

Reactionary rally in Washington demands a response

The drive to transform the legitimate anger over the joblessness, home foreclosures and bank bailouts of the current economic crisis into a racist backlash against Obama manifested itself at a Sept. 12 march on Washington organized by FreedomWorks—a right-wing organization chaired by former Republican House Majority Leader Dick Armey.

Accurate estimates of turnout are difficult to obtain, as media estimates have ranged from hundreds to thousands, to tens of thousands. Some conservatives, such as former Fox News commentator

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JOB NOW

Continued from page 1

on Wall Street and in Washington. Profits and stock prices are up after the government gave the banks and the bosses \$1.2 trillion in outright cash and \$12 trillion more in loan guarantees. What is more, the Federal Reserve and the Treasury bought up their bad debts from the banks.

No one is giving loan guarantees and bailouts to the millions of workers losing their jobs, their homes, their very lives. While Wells Fargo, Bank of America, Citigroup, Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs are showing profits again, the number of unemployed went up in August by another 216,000. The media say it was “only” 216,000.

This is not a recovery. It is a disaster—for the workers.

Under the official numbers given out by the government, 26.4 million are unemployed or under-employed. (This figure is actually too low because jobless workers who stop looking for more than a year are not included. The real number is closer to 30 million.)

The 26.4 million consist of the following:

- 14.9 million officially unemployed,
 - 8.9 million on forced part-time, a rise of 298,000 workers, and
 - 2.6 million discouraged workers who gave up looking.
- Some 5 million have been out of work more than six months, the highest recorded since the Depression. In addition,
- the average work week dropped to 33 hours, the lowest ever recorded,
 - African-American unemployment is 15.1 percent and Latino/a is 13 percent,
 - 9.4 million new jobs are needed just to get back to before the downturn, and
 - 96 million people were living below twice

Moratorium NOW! Coalition, tenants vow to continue fight for justice

Struggle restores power to apartment residents



WW PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

East English Village neighbors demonstrate in support of Belva Davis, who is fighting an illegal foreclosure by Wells Fargo/Wachovia Bank and loan servicer Ocwen Financial.

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire
Detroit

Wayne County Circuit Court Judge Kathleen MacDonald on Sept. 11 ordered DTE Energy to turn the power back on at Highland Towers apartments. The building is located in Highland Park on Woodward Avenue near Glendale. The decision is valid for one week when another court hearing will be held on the status of the situation at Highland Towers.

The residents had been without electricity since Aug. 31 when DTE Energy shut off their services without proper notice. The landlords at Highland Towers had not paid the utility bills for months despite these fees being included in the monthly rents collected from the tenants. The owners have gone into hiding and have set up obstacles for tenants to secure justice.

The Moratorium NOW! Coalition to

Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs has worked with the tenants to demand that DTE Energy restore services pending the outcome of the current dispute involving the landlord’s creditors.

Attorney Robert Day of the Legal Aid and Defender Association Inc. filed the case on behalf of the tenants. Other hearings are scheduled for Sept. 15 and Sept. 18. Attorneys for the tenants are seeking immediate relief for the damages endured by the residents resulting from the actions of both the landlords and DTE Energy.

Michelle Hall-Edwards of Legal Aid and Defenders said, “There will be further litigation and [we] will pursue all claims.” LaTanya Lloyd, a resident at Highland Towers, expressed some relief at the judge’s ruling. She is a co-plaintiff in the case against DTE Energy and the absentee landlords.

Organizers for the Moratorium NOW! Coalition are intensifying their campaign in support of the Highland Towers tenants and building on the victory which resulted in the temporary restoration of power. Activists and tenants have appeared on local television and a mass rally is scheduled at the apartment building on Sept. 14.

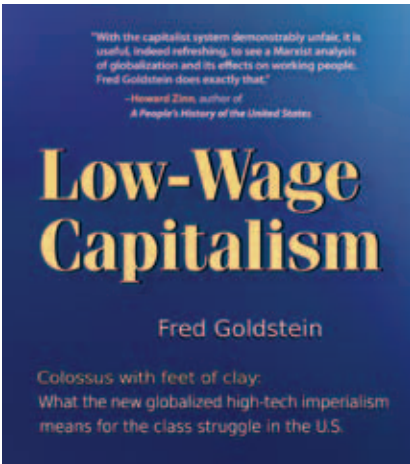
Protest plant closings, evictions

The Moratorium NOW! Coalition held an organizing meeting Sept. 12 which included representatives from Latinos Unidos of Michigan, United Auto Workers Local 1700, Legal Aid and Defender Inc. and state Sen. Martha G. Scott of Highland Park.

A resolution was passed supporting a rally on Sept. 25 to protest the slated 2010

“Low-Wage Capitalism by Fred Goldstein is a most timely and important work, as the working class prepares for a “fightback” during the greatest crisis of capitalism since the Great Depression.”

– Clarence Thomas,
ILWU Local 10 and
Co-chair, Million Worker
March Movement



Low-Wage Capitalism

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the poverty level at the end of 2008, 30 million of them children. (The official poverty level is so low that all experts agree that twice that level is still poverty.)

‘The Katrina of recessions ... folks are on their rooftops’

Most important, the bosses have cut jobs permanently. No hiring is going on and very little is foreseen in the future. While the headlines are about “green shoots” coming up, in the back pages all the experts talk about the “jobless recovery.”

What is a jobless recovery? It’s when business and profits pick up but unemployment keeps going up. Clearly, a jobless recovery is a recovery for the class of capitalist owners, the rich, and a crisis for the working class.

The bosses have used the crisis to increase the productivity of labor—which really means increasing the rate of exploitation of the workers. That means business can grow without growing jobs. For example, in the month of August, factory production rose—but 65,000 factory jobs were lost. (New York Times, Sept. 4)

Allan Sinai, a renowned Wall Street economist, says: “I don’t think businesses will hire back any time soon. Companies are rewarded by the stock markets for not hiring and keeping their costs down. We will see another jobless recovery.”

Rutgers University professor Carl Van Horn did a study of 1,200 workers in New Jersey who were unemployed during the year. He said, “This is not your ordinary dip in the business cycle. Americans believe that this is the Katrina of recessions. Folks are on their rooftops.” (See column by Bob Herbert in New York Times of Sept. 15.)

The message is that the working class and its communities cannot sit back and rely on some capitalist recovery to put them back to work, put them back in their homes, bring money back into the community, or help them recover in any way.

This is why the March for Jobs is seen as a vital initiative. It represents the beginning of a community-labor alliance and is an important step forward in the struggle against unemployment. It is demanding a real public jobs program which puts workers directly to work. And it is aiming to force the employers to hire workers and stop the firing.

The March for Jobs is raising the slogan that a job is a right. And it is based on the concept that only militant mass mobilization can reverse the tide. The workers and the communities that are under attack can only rely on themselves, fighting together in unity, to turn back the

Continued on page 10

sidents

closing of Chrysler’s Sterling Heights Assembly Plant. A statement circulated at the meeting and issued by UAW Local 1700 said, “There are ten billion reasons why you should be concerned with Chrysler’s actions: \$10 billion dollars of U.S. taxpayer money was used to bail out Chrysler and permit Fiat entry back into the North American market. Already in the last twelve months, Chrysler has closed the Newark, Delaware Assembly Plant, the St. Louis South Assembly Plant, and the St. Louis North Assembly Plant.”

After the meeting the group then went by car caravan to the East English Village neighborhood on the city’s eastside for a demonstration in support of homeowner Belva Davis, who is fighting an illegal foreclosure by Wells Fargo/Wachovia Bank and loan servicer Ocwen Financial.

The action was attended by over 100 neighbors and community activists. Davis, a longtime resident of the community, has been willing to make reasonable payments in accordance with the Home Affordable Modification Program, but the loan servicer has consistently refused to work with her.

Nancy Brigham, an East English Village resident and labor activist, chaired the rally outside Davis’ home on Bishop Street. Speakers included Sandra Hines of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition; Olivia Boykins, special assistant to U.S. Rep. John Conyers; Detroit City Council members Alberta Tinsley-Talabi and Kwame Kenyatta; the Rev. Ed Rowe of Central United Methodist Church; and attorney Jerry Goldberg, who is representing Belva Davis in her struggle to halt the eviction by Wells Fargo and Ocwen Financial.

Davis’ supporters have called for a demonstration at the Wachovia offices located at 19770 Mack Ave. in Grosse Pointe Woods on Sept. 29 beginning at noon. Davis’ supporters can also send e-mails to Ocwen Financial president Ronald Faris at rfaris@ocwen.com or call 561-682-8000 to demand justice for Belva Davis. □

Marxist discusses ‘Low Wage Capitalism’



PHOTO: IVAN RANGEL

DENVER

The Tattered Cover Bookstore in Denver hosted author Fred Goldstein on Sept. 3 for a reading and discussion of his book, “Low Wage Capitalism.” More than 40 people attended, not only to hear Goldstein talk about the book, but also to listen to him give an analysis on the capitalist crisis. Many comments and questions were raised, especially about the prospect for a working class struggle and the need for internationalism.

—Larry Hales

The Unemployed, the Homeless, the Hungry & the Poor must no longer be INVISIBLE & SILENT

BEFORE THE G-20 SUMMIT A CALL TO JOIN A NATIONAL



Dr. King’s Dream of a Movement for a Right to a Job

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**Wed • Sept 23 Struggle Around the
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THURS • SEPT 24 Community Speak-Out
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New charges against Chile’s MIR

Who were the real terrorists? Look in Washington

By Teresa Gutiérrez

Political activists of the 1960s and 1970s witnessed some of the most revolutionary developments in history. Consciousness was profoundly shaped by the historic events sweeping the world, from the triumph of the Cuban Revolution to the national liberation struggles in Africa to the French general strike and to the speeches of Che Guevara and Fidel Castro. Even in the United States, mass movements and rebellions arose from the oppressed communities as well as from the anti-war movement in this glorious time.

But there were setbacks and defeats as well, as in Chile. Sept. 11, 1973, will forever be etched in the minds of the Chilean people. Revolutionaries and progressives of the time will never forget that date.

A fascist coup massacred tens of thousands of people as it overturned the pro-socialist government of President Salvador Allende.

Within a few days, a U.S. puppet regime headed by the monstrous butcher Gen. Augusto Pinochet took over. The name Pinochet has become synonymous with terror.

U.S. imperialism was decisive in bringing about this terror and instrumental in the defeat of the Allende government, leading to the murder and disappearances.

U.S.-trained fascist officers rounded up Allende supporters, executing some on the spot. Tens of thousands were taken to a huge stadium where they were tortured, raped, maimed and killed. To this day in Chile the stadium’s name evokes shudders.

Bodies were taken by military planes and dropped in the ocean, leaving families in torment about what had happened. Blood ran through the streets. It may never be known how many actually died or suffered as a result of this fascist turn.

The U.S. government, headed by President Richard Nixon, was complicit in this terror. Major U.S. capitalist corporations like the International Telephone and Telegraph Co., working hand in hand with the CIA and the Chilean ruling class in plotting the counterrevolution, gave the orders.

The role of U.S. imperialism is well documented.

The role of the MIR

The Movement of the Revolutionary Left or MIR is one organization that stands out for its role in organizing and defending the Chilean people.

Chileans were in political motion from the late 1960s up to the time of the fascist coup. Workers in textile and auto plants took over factories to prevent layoffs. They built whole new neighborhoods, often giving them the name “New Havana.” They set up people’s rules in the communities such as no domestic violence or alcohol abuse.

The MIR played a leading role in a militant squatters’ movement, also organizing demonstrations, taking over land and factories and setting out to put an end to exploitation. Along with the Chilean masses, the MIR wanted real fundamental change, not just band-aids.

The MIR supported Allende but warned about the dangers. The MIR was one of the organizations in Chile that understood

the real difference between taking office and taking power.

In March 1972 it warned that not organizing to fight opens the door to fascism. The people needed arms to defend Allende and themselves from the Chilean capitalist state and U.S. imperialism.

The MIR & Victor Toro today

Victor Toro Ramírez, a MIR founder, was forced into exile after the coup. He and his spouse Nieves Ayress, also a leader and freedom fighter brutally tortured by Pinochet’s police, made their home in the Bronx, N.Y., where they have a family and deep roots in the community.

Both Toro and Ayress have been organizing since the early 1980s and head La Peña del Bronx, a multi-issued fight-back organization. They are also active leaders in the May 1st Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights.

In 2007 Toro was racially profiled while riding on Amtrak in upstate New York, arrested and ordered deported. A support committee is demanding his political asylum. His lawyer, Carlos Moreno, argues that much of the Pinochet regime still lingers in Chile and deportation could lead to Toro’s execution.

New twist in the case

On Aug. 26, the Department of Homeland Security and ICE—Immigration Customs and Enforcement—issued a brief with a new and ominous twist on Toro’s case.

The DHS and ICE now argue that Toro



Toro, third from left, at news conference regarding his case. Toro’s next hearing is set for Jan. 11.

is linked to a “terrorist” organization: the MIR. Moreno argues that now it will be much more difficult for an immigration judge to counter the “terrorism” charge and grant political asylum.

Toro is surprisingly elated by this turn, because, he says, “If the U.S. government wants to put the MIR on trial, this gives us the opportunity to put the role of U.S. imperialism in Chile on trial.”

Moreno is making a special appeal to those who were politically aware in the 1960s and 1970s. He is asking for lawyers, activists, academics, etc., to submit testimony proving that the MIR is not “terrorist” but a people’s organization.

The Committee to Defend Victor Toro urges everyone to get involved. Toro is no longer another migrant the U.S. wants to suppress and deport. His case is now about the right to fight back against exploitation and imperialism.

A victory for the U.S. in the case would send an ominous message to the people of Honduras, Venezuela, Haiti, the Philippines and so on: dare to struggle and you will suffer imperialism’s wrath.

Like the people of Honduras, who have earned the name “los sin miedo” [the fearless], Toro and people like him, because they will fight imperialism no matter what, are also feared by U.S. imperialism.

For information on supporting Toro, visit www.may1.info or call 212-633-6646. □

Cuban leader says ‘Obama must free the Five!’

By Gloria Rubac
Havana, Cuba

“Please tell President Obama that if he wants you to believe in his promise of change, then he must free the Cuban Five!” Ricardo Alarcón, president of the Cuban Parliament, told members of the 20th Pastors for Peace Friendshipment Caravan when they arrived in Havana this summer from the U.S.

“We need millions of people in the U.S. to tell Obama that, ‘Yes, you can! ¡Sí, se puede!’ He can free the Five and he must free the Five. He has a moral obligation to free them NOW!”

Speaking at the William Carey Church in downtown Havana, Alarcón, along with the Rev. Raúl Suárez, pastor of Havana’s Ebenezer Baptist Church; Kenia Serrano, president of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the People (ICAP); and representatives of the Cuban Communist Party and the Young Communists officially welcomed more than 140 caravan members who had collected and brought 130 tons of humanitarian aid to the people of Cuba.

With urgency in his voice, Alarcón stressed: “Make sure the people in the U.S. know what is happening to the Cuban Five. Obama wants us to believe he will make a change in the U.S. government’s attitude to Cuba. But while the Pastor’s caravan was traveling across the U.S., the U.S. again denied a visa to Adriana Pérez, the wife of Gerardo Hernández, one of the Five. Pérez and Olga Salanueva, wife of René González, have not seen their husbands for over 10 years.”

The Cuban Five are Hernández,



Left to right: Irma Sehwerert; Roberto González with Adriana Pérez speaking; and Ricardo Alarcón, president of the Cuban Parliament.

González, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and Antonio Guerrero. Sept. 12 marked 11 years that they have been political prisoners of the U.S.

The Five were legally monitoring anti-Cuban terrorist groups in Miami in order to report back to Cuba about these groups’ criminal plans. They were arrested by the FBI in Miami on Sept. 12, 1998, and held for the next 17 months in solitary confinement. They were tried and convicted in a Miami court in 2001 on trumped-up charges and given sentences ranging from 15 years to a double life sentence.

Since being convicted, the Five have been locked up in separate prisons around the U.S. and have been denied visits by their families in Cuba. Even the families of the three who are allowed visits often wait for months and years for visas.

The Five won an appeal before a three-judge panel at the Federal Circuit Court in Atlanta in 2005, but the victory was reversed and their sentences have remained intact. On June 15, 2009, the

U.S. Supreme Court refused to review their case. Labañino, Guerrero and Fernando González are now in Miami, awaiting a resentencing hearing which could significantly reduce their prison terms.

Throughout the island nation, there is information about the Cuban Five everywhere—in photo displays, on billboards, on petitions for workers to sign at the job, in museums and at the beaches. There is a coordinated general information campaign about the Five, known in Cuba as Los Cinco Héroes. In schools, hotels, churches and restaurants, displays educate and update Cubans on the political prisoners being held by the U.S.

Alarcón emphasized that Cuba’s people will not rest until their five comrades are home where they belong. “Adriana was denied a visa because they say she is a security threat. ... She doesn’t want to travel around the U.S. She doesn’t want to live in the U.S. She wants to see her husband. So I say to the Obama administration, ‘Just let Gerardo come home and the

threat of Adriana will go away!’

“The solution is that Gerardo and the other four should be set free if there is going to be any new change with Cuba. Their freedom is fundamental to any change in relations with Cuba and with Latin America.”

Alarcón continued, “The whole case against the Five can only be explained as a relationship between the previous U.S. administration and the terrorists in Miami. President Bush admitted into the U.S. a terrorist named Luis Posada Carriles who should be in prison in Venezuela. Obama should extradite him to Venezuela. There are several international treaties that are clear about fighting terrorism.

“The Montreal Agreement, Article 7, allows that Posada Carriles be extradited or else tried where he is now. But he has been enjoying U.S. hospitality for four years now. Obama has been in office for seven months and he must look at this case. The day that the Supreme Court refused to review the case of the Five, I

Escalate criminal occupation?

Debate over Afghan war moves to Congress

By John Catalinotto

With Defense Secretary Robert Gates expected to ask for 45,000 more U.S. troops for Afghanistan, it looks like a U.S. escalation of that ugly war will be the next big issue to be fought out in Congress, with most opposition coming from Democrats. Will the administration rely on support from the most rightist forces in Congress to continue to promote the war against the Afghans, sending many thousands of U.S. youth and contract mercenaries to kill and die occupying that Central Asian land?

This issue has been sharpened by the obviously fraudulent election of incumbent Afghan President Hamid Karsai, the growing casualties among U.S. and other NATO occupation troops, and the ability of the Afghan resistance forces to strike the occupiers in any part of the country.

President Barack Obama up to now has defended the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, contrasting it with the war on Iraq. His administration has already doubled U.S. troop strength to 68,000 this year, with an additional 38,000 troops mostly from NATO allies whose populations oppose the war. Obama used the Sept. 11 commemoration of the 2001 attacks to again justify Afghanistan's occupation as a means to end the threat from al-Qaida.

Recent polls by the Boston Globe and CBS News show, however, that more than half the U.S. population opposes sending more troops and that Democratic Party voters are decidedly against an escalation of the U.S. presence. In addition, many of the Democratic Party's politicians in Congress are reluctant to openly embrace a wider war in Central Asia.

On Sept. 11 Democratic Sen. Carl Levin of Michigan—head of the Senate Armed Services Committee—called for no more U.S. troops to Afghanistan. Democratic Sens. Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire and Dianne Feinstein of California, along with Republican Susan Collins of Maine, continued to question the need for new forces and its wisdom on CNN's "State of the Union" on Sept. 13.

That same day, at a conference of experts, former President Jimmy Carter's

Europeans, too, look negatively at military intervention in Central Asia. Here at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate, the Left Party holds a protest demanding the German armed forces 'Get out of Afghanistan.'

PHOTO: GABRIELE SENFT

adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski also warned that a U.S. escalation in Afghanistan could become a quagmire. The imperialist strategist Brzezinski had urged Carter in 1979 to throw U.S. arms and financial support to reactionary Afghans who fought the government brought to power by a progressive revolution. From 1979 to 1992 the CIA backed all the Afghan groups that fought against Soviet troops, who had intervened at the request of the pro-Socialist government in Kabul.

Republican Sens. John McCain from Arizona and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and "Independent" rightist Sen. Joe Lieberman from Connecticut published a pro-war piece in the Wall Street Journal online on Sept. 13. The three called for more U.S. troops and a long-term U.S. commitment to the Afghan occupation. In their argument, they favorably quoted Obama's statement that the Afghan war is "a war of necessity."

Serious differences—but over tactics

Levin argued that adding U.S. troops would not only result in a large increase in U.S. casualties, it would arouse more Afghan support for the anti-U.S. resistance. Levin instead suggests that U.S. and other NATO forces, and mercenary forces



be used to train Afghan troops and officers to form an expanded Afghan army. The three senators speaking on CNN's talk show expressed a similar position.

The three pro-war senators writing in the Wall Street Journal took a position that sounded much like George Bush did regarding Iraq. They said the U.S. must prevail and that if the public backed a strong intervention with whatever force was needed, the U.S. would prevail, "just as in Iraq."

The argument represents serious tactical differences within the ruling-class establishment. On the principal question, however, they both make the pro-imperialist argument that the U.S. has a right to intervene 10,000 miles from its shore and that this intervention—if done effectively—would protect the people of the U.S. and bring democracy to the Afghans, improve conditions for women and develop the country. This is as far from the truth as the 935 Bush administration lies about al-Qaida and "arms of mass destruction" used to justify the illegal invasion of Iraq.

U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, starting in 1979, has overturned the one progressive government that defended women's rights—the pro-socialist government

brought in by the 1978 revolution. It has caused 30 years of civil wars, with the usual deaths, maiming and disruption of life. It has displaced millions of Afghans, forcing many across the border into Pakistan, where the war has followed.

In the U.S. it has helped only a handful of powerful arms corporations that get rich from war and has depleted the funds that could be used for social services. For these corporations, the war in Iraq was also lucrative. But despite the claims of McCain, Lieberman and Graham, the Iraq war has been a complete nightmare for the Iraqi people—killing more than 1 million, turning another 4 million into internal or foreign refugees and poisoning the relationship between sectarian groups as never before existed.

And the Iraq war is still going on, with 130,000 U.S. troops still occupying the country. If the casualties are down from the last year or two, it is only because these troops have left the cities and spend more time in their barracks.

Role of anti-war movement

The Afghan issue creates a dilemma for the Obama administration. If Obama promotes an escalation of the war, he will need the most reactionary and racist elements in the Republican Party to back this program, including many of the same forces that have attacked all his other programs and viciously attacked his leadership. If he hesitates to expand the war, the militarists—and all the other enemies of the administration—will blame him for "losing" Afghanistan.

For the large majority here that has opposed the U.S. intervention in Iraq, there should be no dilemma over Afghanistan. The so-called anti-terror aspect of the war is a cover story for U.S. military expansion into Central Asia. Even in the official story, no Afghans were involved in Sept. 11.

An expansion of the war will mean more horrors for the Afghans and a growing drain of U.S. lives and wealth that will—as with all U.S. wars—be taken out of the necessary social services at home and hurt the working class, the growing mass of unemployed and all oppressed peoples.

A series of anti-war actions are planned in October around the U.S. to demand the U.S. get out of Afghanistan. They should get the support of all progressive organizations and individuals, as should the growing number of U.S. troops who are refusing duty in that country.

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saw Posada Carriles in Miami, in public, celebrating this ruling!

"I say to Mr. Obama, 'We're talking about the present, not the past. Stop collaborating with terrorists and stop punishing those who should not only be free but receiving the homage of the American people.'"

In a joint meeting of the Caravan and the Venceremos Brigade hosted by ICAP, several family members of the Five spoke.

Attorney Roberto González, René's brother, gave a legal update on the case. "We thought we would win because the facts and the law were on our side. The facts were with us, so we were disappointed. We still have some legal options, but we also need your solidarity and help. The lawyers can't win on their own. We aren't pessimistic. We will be strong and we will continue to fight legally, but we are counting on you to help."

Pérez told of a recent meeting between the families of the Five and the U.S. Congressional Black Caucus. "They were mainly interested in the human issues, our denial of visits," she said. "They left with the conviction to help us but so far their actions have had a negative response from the government. ... It is important for us that you approach your Congress and President Obama."

Many U.S. activists took the floor to discuss ideas to build solidarity for the Five, including visits with Congress, public meetings, demonstrations on the 11th anniversary of their imprisonment and the creation of committees on high school and college campuses.

After much discussion and brainstorming, Irma Schwerert, René's mother, told the crowd: "We thank you for sharing your time and your solidarity with us. Do not abandon us. Take all the ideas and initiatives you have discussed today and make them happen."

The earlier event with Alarcón ended with the Rev. Lucius Walker, leader of Pastors for Peace, proclaiming: "Whenever the Pastors for Peace Caravan arrives in Cuba, something special happens. You share with us a special love and joy. In the midst of your struggle with the evil empire to the North, the struggle to free the Five, you are not only able to live with dignity but you exude a sense of pride and nobility which sends us away even more ashamed of our government. When we return home, we will not only carry your message about the Five but we will put it into action. May your gift of gracious living under communism be your gift to the world. ... As Fidel said about the Cuban Five, '¡Volverán! They will return!'" □

WORKERS WORLD'S TOP 10 REASONS

Why the U.S. ruling class won't stop the war against Afghanistan

1. War is the most efficient way to rob the public trough.

2. Is there a better way to divert attention from the loss of 7 million jobs in two years?

3. So neither the Taliban nor any Afghans were involved in 9/11. Your point is?

4. Without a war frenzy, Halliburton can't get contracts without paying expensive kickbacks to Congress.

5. Every new war is a dress rehearsal for the next war.

6. If the Pentagon keeps trying, it might find a people that doesn't hate and resist the occupying army that kills its civilians and destroys its villages.

7. But it's looking like Afghanistan isn't that country.

8. And maybe Pakistan isn't either.

9. Afghanistan has never succumbed to foreign domination throughout its thousands of years of history, but there's always a first time.

10. Maybe we should skip all that war profiteering and create good-paying jobs here instead. ... Nope!

WORKERS WORLD STATEMENT

IN PITTSBURGH

Fight racism, build unity!

Continued from page 1

pain of a jobless rate of 8.9 percent. This is the level that, even in relatively “good” times, was endured for decades in the communities of color. It is terribly important that white people give serious thought to this. Being aware of the brutal exploitation that Black, Latino/a, Indigenous and other oppressed workers have suffered every day and also taking an active role in combating racism are essential to building the kind of multinational solidarity that will restore the power of labor in this country.

The Pittsburgh march will be a great act of solidarity in a city and a region that desperately needs it. While the earthquake of layoffs, evictions and foreclosures is being felt all over the U.S., the de-industrialized Midwest is its epicenter. In the city of Detroit, once Motor City to the world, the jobless rate is now almost 30 percent. Such desperate conditions haven’t been seen since the Great Depression.

During the Depression, many of Pittsburgh’s Black steelworkers lived on The Hill, the same neighborhood that is hosting today’s Jobs March. From their homes, they could look out on the sky-

scrapers housing the offices of the giant steel companies that paid them less than white workers and laid them off at nearly twice the rate. Even in 1940, the unemployment rate among Black steelworkers in Pittsburgh aged 18 to 44 years was an astonishing 71 percent. (“Out of the Crucible: Black Steelworkers in Western Pennsylvania” by Dennis C. Dickerson)

The industrial unions that muscled up in 1936 and 1937 owed much to Black-white solidarity. Nowhere was this more evident than in Pittsburgh, where Black steel laborers working in segregated mills became the staunchest supporters of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee. It was this solidarity that let union organizers take on the mighty U.S. Steel Co. and bring it to its knees.

The suffering now descending on the working class can only be fought effectively if working people of all genders, sexualities, ages and national origins, their unions and community organizations band together to demand basic human rights: the right to a job or income, to an affordable home, to health care and education, and to live securely without fear of bigotry or economic attacks.

On to Pittsburgh! □

JOBS NOW

Gov’t must bail out workers, not the rich

Continued from page 7

effects of this crisis.

No politicians are going to do it for us. No government bailout of the bosses will help get 30 million workers back to work at a living wage, with benefits. Furthermore, only a united struggle can stop the wave of layoffs, foreclosures and evictions.

Fear of the workers is the only thing that can really influence the government, the bosses and the landlords. Without the struggle, the ruling class establishment will talk the workers to death while doing nothing but take care of themselves.

Fighting racism key to the struggle

The March for Jobs also has a strong anti-racist component and a call for the unity of all workers. This is at a time when racism is raising its ugly head in an attempt to divide the workers, setting white workers against Black, Latino/a, Asian and Middle Eastern workers.

It follows the verbal attack on President Barack Obama during his speech on health care to the joint session of Congress when Rep. Joe Wilson of South Carolina yelled out, in an unprecedented display of racist arrogance, “You lie.” Wilson was one of the seven South Carolina state legislators who voted in April 2000 not to remove the Confederate flag from the State Capitol house. He is a member of the Sons of Veterans of the Confederacy, a racist organization that considers the heritage of slavery something to uphold.

He speaks the mind of the racist, reactionary and ultra-rightist crowds that turned up at Town Hall meetings and at the latest “Tea Party” in Washington with racist signs and slogans. These ugly demonstrations, that are supposed to be against health care reform, represent a de facto alliance between the health care industry, which has been mobilizing employees to participate, and the ultra-right wing of the ruling class.

The issue on which Wilson chose to challenge Obama concerned undocumented workers and their right to health care. Undocumented workers are workers, just like all others who live by sell-

ing their labor time, but their status here makes them more vulnerable and more easily exploited.

They are driven out of their homelands by poverty engendered by U.S. transnational corporations—the same transnationals that are throwing workers out of their jobs and homes right here in the U.S. Undocumented workers are forced to leave their families and cultures to work in back-breaking and often dangerous jobs like construction, meat packing and picking crops, or in menial and low-paid employment like food service and domestic work.

If you are exploited by a boss, you are a worker. All workers must stick together for the fightback. That is the message of the March for Jobs.

In this crisis, the struggle for solidarity with the unemployed is in the tradition of the beginning of the struggle against the Great Depression. The Unemployed Councils were the earliest form of the fightback, followed by general strikes and sit-down strikes in the middle of the 1930s.

This struggle can be the beginning of a much wider fightback, which is needed to keep the bosses from pushing this crisis onto the backs of the workers. The struggle for jobs is fundamental to the well-being of the working class under capitalism.

But beyond that, it is time to start fighting for a system where labor is not just a slave to capital; where workers do not have to depend on profit-making bosses just to live; where everything the workers produce, every service they perform, belongs to them, not to the bosses.

It is time to fight for a system where everything that is produced, every service that is performed, is owned collectively by the producers, the workers. This is the basis for an economic system that can be run on a planned basis for human need and not to profit a handful of millionaires and billionaires. In other words, a socialist system.

Fred Goldstein is author of “Low-Wage Capitalism,” a recently published book that analyzes the effects of globalization on the U.S. working class.

Eyewitness Lebanon

Israeli’s illegal cluster bombs

By Joyce Chediac

A vast reconstruction effort, spearheaded by Hezbollah, the Lebanese resistance movement, is rebuilding some 300 villages and towns in Lebanon devastated by the Israeli bombing of 2006. Yet these mountainous regions have not yet restored much of the small family farming plots so crucial to the economy.

Why? Because many of these areas remain mined and dangerous.

In an attempt to permanently destroy southern Lebanon’s farming-based economy, Israel dropped more than a million cluster bombs there in the last 72 hours of the war, after the cease-fire had been negotiated.

By the time the fighting stopped, 26 percent of southern Lebanon’s cultivatable land was covered with unexploded bombs and 34 million square meters (13 square miles) were contaminated, according to the United Nations. The deadly bombs were everywhere—hanging from trees, in orange and banana fields—making it impossible to collect harvests or to plow the land for new planting.

“The scope was extensive and unprecedented in any modern use of these types of cluster weapons,” says Chris Clark, the program manager for the U.N. Mine Action Coordination Centre of South Lebanon. (Christian Science Monitor, Feb. 7, 2007)

This carpet-bombing of farms was collective punishment against the civilian population, a barbarity which was outlawed after the Nazi horrors of World War II. Israel’s use of cluster bombs against civilians violates the 1949 Geneva Conventions, a body of international law defining the protection of civilians, detainees, the wounded and humanitarian workers in wars.

Clearly, the dropping of these bombs was a war crime. Yet there has been no international outcry of “war criminal” or “state terrorism” against Israel or against the U.S. government, which supplied the bombs and surely gave Israel the green light to use them.

Since then, Israel has made every effort to obstruct the cleanup. Since the 2006 cease-fire, the U.N. has asked Tel Aviv to provide maps of where the bombs were dropped so they could be cleared. Israel finally provided the maps in May—three years later.

By that time, erosion, heavy rains, human construction and other factors had moved the bombs, driving many deeper into the soil and making them harder to remove. It is no wonder that Brig. Mohammed Fahmi, head of the Lebanese Demining Center, called the Israeli maps “useless.” He added, “What benefit can we get from such information after three years, and after witnessing 50 deaths and 350 injuries?” (Beirut Daily Star, Aug. 19).

Many of the victims of unexploded cluster bombs are children under the age of 12. And the casualties continue. On Aug. 19, ironically the 60th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, a cluster bomb wounded two boys as they gathered firewood in the village of Toulín. A few days later, a bomb killed a Syrian man and wounded two others in the village of Yanta.

If that were not enough, in May, many of the internationally based companies clearing mines announced they were running out of funds and would drastically cut back their efforts. With no replacement of funds, some predicted that clearing the mostly agricultural area of unexploded bombs would take eight years or more. (IRIN, May 14)

According to the Lebanese National Demining Office, 1,080 locations were contaminated with cluster bombs and only 562 of them have been cleared. Some 16 million square meters of land are still contaminated, of which 12 million are due for clearing.

Who is rising to the occasion to help Lebanon’s working people? Certainly not the U.S., which has ignored the suffering in south Lebanon. Once again, it is the resistance movement and its allies that have stepped forward—the very forces Washington calls “terrorist.”

On Aug. 14, the launch of a new mine-clearing nongovernmental organization was announced—the Peace Generation Organization for Demining, which is funded by an Iranian foundation. Iran is an ally and supporter of Hezbollah.

In the southern town of Nabatieh, this group signed an agreement with Lebanon’s National Demining Office to clear infested spots with the help of the Iranian company Ayman Sazan. Only days later, it was working in two fields in the towns of Zawtar al-Sharqiya and Qabrikha. (Daily Star, Aug. 19)

After the war, it was the resistance which sought to insure the safety of the people in the mined areas. Hezbollah went to the bombed areas first, determined where the bombs were, and then guided the people to return safely to the South. Hezbollah has conducted its own efforts to clear Lebanese soil of Israeli cluster bombs and mines, though it maintains that the main responsibility for the clearing belongs to the Lebanese army. □

Health care debate

Continued from page 6

Michelle Malkin, have embarrassed themselves by falsely reporting that millions turned out for the racist bash.

Speakers and attendees decried government spending and the bank bailouts. Towing the health insurance industry line, many speakers falsely railed against the Democratic plan as a government takeover of health care. The tone often dripped with racism and sexism as speakers lashed out repeatedly at President Obama and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

The rally is evidence that a small, but vocal, extreme right wing has organized itself to promote its reactionary agenda and block any chance at reform. This right-wing political movement has felt emboldened by the absence of a vigorous and united left movement in this country.

President Obama held a campaign-style rally in Minnesota on the same day as the Washington event. An estimated 15,000 people showed up for a rally punctuated with cries of “Yes we can!”

Democratic Party rallies such as this are certainly better than complete silence in the face of a right-wing onslaught, but they are no substitute for militant mass action in the streets.

Only a movement of employed and unemployed workers that stands up for a jobs program at a living wage, Medicare for All, and a moratorium on layoffs, home foreclosures and evictions can smash this racist reaction where it stands. The Sept. 20 National March for Jobs and Tent City in Pittsburgh is a significant first step in this direction.

Health care reform & revolution

Revolutionaries must not be intimidated by either racist outbursts or insurance industry distortions. More than 50

Amid corporate-generated hysteria

Libya’s Qaddafi to visit New York

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Libyan leader Mummar Qaddafi will attend the annual United Nations General Assembly in New York City later this month amid a corporate-media provoked racist campaign to prevent him from staying in Englewood, N.J., on a plot of land owned by Libya’s U.N. Mission. Libya’s government announced on Aug. 31 that Qaddafi, who is also chairperson of the continental African Union, would not stay in Englewood but remain in New York City during the General Assembly gathering of over 150 heads of state from around the globe.

This campaign of anti-Libyan hysteria is part of the fallout emanating from the Scottish government’s decision to release Libyan Abdel Basset al-Megrahi from prison Aug. 20 on humanitarian grounds, as al-Megrahi was recently diagnosed with terminal prostate cancer. Al-Megrahi had been convicted in connection with the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in December 1998. A former airline executive, al-Megrahi has always maintained his innocence, and was in the process of appealing his conviction when he was released.

In response to al-Megrahi’s release, Washington has resumed political attacks on the Libyan government. President Barack Obama said that the Libyan government should have placed al-Megrahi under house arrest and that welcoming him by the people of this North African country was a “mistake.”

Some Englewood residents and its mayor said they would protest Qaddafi’s visit and even block him from setting up a tent on the land the Libyans own. These efforts illustrate the renewed attacks on the Libyan government, which U.S. imperialism has for years called a “terrorist state.”

Under former President Ronald Reagan, the U.S. bombed Libya in April 1986, killing scores of people and attacking Qaddafi’s family, even killing one of his daughters. The African country had been subjected to economic sanctions and a ban on flights from other nations.

In a letter published in the New York Times on Aug. 30, Saif Al-Islam El-Qaddafi, the son of the Libyan leader, disputed Western press reports that the former political prisoner was given a “hero’s welcome.” He said that the people who welcomed al-Megrahi were largely his relatives and clan members.

He wrote that “Libya has worked with Britain, the United States and other Western countries for more than five years now to defuse the tensions of earlier times, and to promote trade, security and improved relations. I believe that clarifying the facts in the Lockerbie case can only further assist this process.”

Libya commemorates 40 years of revolution

Libya had been colonized by Italy during the early part of the 20th century. Even though it was granted formal independence in 1951, Libya remained largely under the influence of the West. On Sept. 1, 1969, Col. Mummar Qaddafi led a popular coup against the Western-backed

monarchy of King Idris and the situation changed.

Qaddafi headed a group within the military—the Revolutionary Command Council—which in 1969 proclaimed the Libya Arab Republic. The motto of the RCC was “freedom, socialism, and unity” and the group pledged itself to eliminating injustice and backwardness. After negotiating with Washington, the RCC government told U.S. military forces to leave Libya and close Wheelus Air Base.

Libya also provided assistance to various national liberation movements and progressive governments throughout the Arab world and Africa. The government Qaddafi heads has utilized the vast oil reserves in the country to build up the national infrastructure and to provide education for the Libyan masses and other visitors from throughout the world.

“In recent years the entire country has slowly begun to resemble one massive construction site. ‘Flats are going up all over Libya,’ says business consultant Sami Zaptia. ‘After September 1, we expect some announcements as to who exactly is going to get the houses.’” (BBC, Aug. 31)

A special African Union meeting in Libya as well as the erection of large-scale housing developments marked Libya’s 40th anniversary celebrations.

According to the Energy Information Administration, “Libya, a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), holds the largest proven oil reserves in Africa, followed by Nigeria and Algeria. The Oil and Gas Journal (OGJ) says that Libya had total proven oil reserves of 43.7 billion bar-

rels as of January 2009, up from 41.5 billion barrels in 2008. About 80 percent of Libya’s proven oil reserves are located in the Sirte basin, which is responsible for 90 percent of the country’s oil output.” (Official energy statistics from the U.S. government)

In recent years Libya has emerged from the U.S.- and British-imposed sanctions and isolation. Italy, Libya’s former colonial ruler, will honor the 40th anniversary celebration with a display by its Air Force aerobatics team. Trade between Libya and Italy has expanded significantly over the last few years.

Libya has also extended its economic cooperation agreements with other countries throughout the European continent. The country provides 20 percent of the natural gas supplies to Switzerland. It has agreements to supply natural gas to Spain and Italy as well.

The Libyans have also held discussions with Britain and the United States about resuming economic cooperation. It was reported that the release of al-Megrahi was related to ongoing negotiations involving oil exploration and importation.

Libya’s celebration of the 40th anniversary of the revolution has been acknowledged by governments throughout the African continent and the world. President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe traveled to Libya to participate in the AU meeting there and to recognize the achievements of the country over the last four decades.

Libyan special envoy Mukthar Ganas visited Zimbabwe in early August to invite President Mugabe to the AU summit and the revolutionary festivities. □

and racism

Continued from page 10

million people living inside the U.S. lack health insurance. Another 25 million are underinsured. Radical crises like the one in health care require radical solutions.

Revolutionaries take into account the immediate drive for reform and the long-term struggle for revolution when making demands on the system. Minimum and maximum demands are the result of this process.

“Medicare for All” is an appropriate minimum demand for this period. It is a demand that corresponds to the consciousness of the workers and responds to the crisis in health care. Medicare for All is a single-payer system of national health insurance that organizes health financing through a single public agency and removes private insurance companies as the arbiters of who does and does not receive adequate care. It has been proposed in Congress as H.R. 676.

Medicare for All represents an immediate demand that would fix some of the most glaring problems in health care, but what workers really need is a humane system of health care that entirely removes the profit motive out of the equation, from financing to delivery.

This maximum working-class demand requires socialism to be fully realized. Socialist medicine—such as that which exists in Cuba—is a system that is publicly financed and administered. Hospitals and clinics are democratically operated, with doctors and nurses working as public employees. Production of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment are public enterprises designed to meet people’s needs.

Medicare for All is the right thing to demand right now. Only socialism can provide the final answer for workers’ health care needs. □

By **Audrey Hoak**
Philadelphia

Around 70 protesters from dozens of groups on the East Coast took on the Army Experience Center at the Franklin Mills Mall on Sept. 12, with determination to shut it down. For a few hours, at least, they did. The center closed during the action and several arrests were made.

Some of the signs and banners read: “War is not a game!” “Stop teaching children to kill!” and “More U.S. soldiers committed suicide than were killed in combat January-July 2009.” This was the second significant protest against the Army’s latest recruitment scheme aimed at youth. Local media were made aware of the actions, but no coverage was forthcoming.

In August 2008 the Army went retail at the giant Franklin Mills Outlet Mall in northeast Philadelphia. The \$12 million, 14,500-square-foot Army Experience Center is a pilot program to test a new marketing strategy targeting children as young as 13. The AEC is nestled across from an indoor skateboard park and next to a music store.

The AEC houses a tactical operations center and is equipped with interactive displays, including a real “Apache” helicopter, M-16 rifles, automatic machine guns, an armored Humvee and a tank used to train soldiers. In the back room of the AEC, children touch and feel weapons created for killing.

While the games of violence and combat draw in the young public, a staff of more than 20 soldiers—active military recruiters—looking like friendly, civilian salespeople dressed not in uniforms but in khaki pants and white polo shirts, pitch military career specialties and perks.

Army Experience Center shut down



PHOTO: KELLY VALDEZ

Sept. 12 protest at the Franklin Mills Mall.

It comes as no surprise that the U.S. government fails to protect youth from these aggressive and abusive military recruiting practices. A provision of the “No Child Left Behind” Act forces schools to allow military recruitment without parental consent. The personal information of hundreds of thousands of youth is stored in databases allowing the military to profile and cherry-pick future soldiers, while the Pentagon produces video games to attract young teens.

The expanding military budget, which grows at the expense of social programs, along with the lack of jobs and inability to afford college produces a wider audience of young people vulnerable to military recruitment. Jobs with living wages, decent, affordable homes, quality education and comprehensive health care are basic human rights and nobody should have to join the military to have them. Children should have the right to be protected from harm.

There is a private criminal complaint pending against the AEC, Franklin Mills

Mall and its owner, Simon Properties Inc. Among the charges are operating a storefront inducing minors to witness and participate in acts of violence, through simulators constructed with actual weapons and armored vehicles initially built and meant for combat in a war zone; endangering the welfare of a child; criminal solicitation of a minor; and corruption of minors.

The demonstration was endorsed by the Northwest Greens; World Can’t Wait; Code Pink; American Friends Service Committee, Youth and Militarism Program; Gray Panthers NYC Network; Granny Peace Brigade, New York City and Philadelphia; Brandywine Peace Community; Philadelphia International Action Center; War Resisters League, Delaware and Philadelphia; After Downing Street.org; Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Philadelphia; Delaware Valley Veterans for America; Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern; Chester County Peace Movement; Veterans for Peace chapters 31 and 96; and other organizations. □

La masacre de civiles afganos por la OTAN pone a la guerra en los titulares

Por John Catalinotto

Mientras se acerca el día de decidir sobre la intensificación de la ocupación de Afganistán liderada por Estados Unidos, una masacre de afganos en la provincia norteña de Kunduz ha puesto a esta guerra en el centro del escenario mundial y ha agudizado la oposición popular dentro de los países de la OTAN, incluyendo en los mismos Estados Unidos.

Los eventos amenazan ser otro gran desafío para la administración del Presidente Barack Obama, la cual en las próximas semanas tendrá que llegar a una decisión sobre la petición del General Stanley McChrystal de aumentar entre 20 y 40 mil soldados adicionales además de miles de “contratistas” para proveer apoyo logístico. McChrystal dirige las fuerzas de la OTAN en Afganistán.

Si los reportes en la prensa capitalista referente a la masacre son exactos, los eventos se desarrollaron de esta manera.

Unidades de la resistencia afgana tomaron dos camiones-tanques con combustible de la OTAN. Sin poder mover los camiones a través del río, la resistencia dejó los camiones en una pequeña isla. Civiles y guerrilleros comenzaron a descargar el combustible en pequeños recipientes.

Un avión de reconocimiento estadounidense descubrió los camiones y a las personas que los descargaban. Un comandante de una unidad de la OTAN en la región dijo luego que él consideró que

el combustible era una amenaza para la seguridad de su unidad. Sin saber quién estaba alrededor del camión, él ordenó el bombardeo de los camiones.

Entonces, temprano el 4 de septiembre, aviones de guerra de Estados Unidos dejaron caer sobre cada camión una bomba de 500 libras. El combustible explotó y se incineró rápido matando o hiriendo a cientos de personas en la isla. Muchas eran civiles, incluso niños que llegaban para sacar combustible.

Según un reporte por la BBC del 7 de septiembre, el Talibán, la fuerza principal de resistencia, dijo que 150 personas perecieron y exigió una investigación del golpe aéreo por la ONU sobre los derechos humanos.

Para el pueblo afgano, esta fue otra de una larga serie de tragedias que la intervención estadounidense ha impuesto sobre ellos en los últimos 30 años. Comenzó con la subversión por la administración de Carter, del gobierno pro socialista de Kabul en 1979, seguido por más de una década de apoyo por la CIA a las fuerzas más reaccionarias y atrasadas en el país. Esto ha alcanzado un nuevo nivel desde la invasión estadounidense en el año 2001.

Este evento trágico sin embargo, también ilustra la actual situación política y tendrá amplias consecuencias políticas.

El comandante alemán de la unidad involucrada de la OTAN defendió su decisión de ordenar el bombardeo. Dijo que era para proteger a los soldados

alemanes de ocupación bajo su mando. El Ministro de Defensa alemán, Franz Josef Jung, ha respaldado al comandante diciendo que los talibanes están teniendo como blanco a las tropas alemanas debido a las próximas elecciones nacionales en Alemania.

El bombardeo enfrenta al régimen conservador de la cancillera Angela Merkel con un nuevo problema justamente cuando ella tenía la esperanza de mantener la cuestión afgana en un segundo plano. El riesgo no se deriva del socio de Merkel, los socialdemócratas, quienes también discretamente apoyan la participación militar alemana en la ocupación liderada por EEUU de Afganistán, sino de otros partidos más progresistas y de la población alemana.

El relativamente nuevo partido “La Izquierda” que tuvo un éxito lo suficientemente grande en las recientes elecciones locales como para darle la posibilidad de formar dos gobiernos estatales, ha abierto una lucha contra la guerra de Afganistán en el Bundestag (Parlamento). También ha convocado manifestaciones contra la guerra en la Puerta de Brandemburgo en Berlín y en otras ciudades. En Alemania y en muchos de los otros estados europeos miembros de la OTAN así como en Canadá, existe una creciente oposición a la aventura afgana. Las muertes masivas por los bombardeos probablemente desencadenarán una nueva oleada de protestas.

Papel de McChrystal y EEUU

La masacre de civiles ha puesto al general McChrystal a la defensiva. McChrystal había emitido órdenes de evitar los ataques a distancia que podrían alienar a los afganos. El general demostró su punto de vista al correr el riesgo de ir al sitio del bombardeo. Allí expresó públicamente su preocupación por las víctimas.

Esto no quiere decir que el general McChrystal sea más benévolo y compasivo que el comandante alemán. Se trata simplemente de que la visión de McChrystal de una guerra contrainsurgente proviene de su experiencia en Irak: La brutalidad debe ser más deliberada y más selectiva en la elección de sus objetivos.

Según un artículo de Tom Hayden en la edición del 13 de marzo de *The Nation*, McChrystal dirigió un programa en Irak donde los efectivos de las unidades de las fuerzas especiales, como las llamadas Fuerzas Delta o las Navy Seals salían en misiones secretas durante la noche para degollar a líderes de la resistencia. El general considera que este enfoque es más eficiente y cuesta menos que el bombardeo masivo contra un pueblo entero.

Una acción reciente de las unidades de la 10ª División de Montaña de EEUU es consistente con la visión de McChrystal,

irrumpieron en un hospital administrado por Suecia en Shaniz, provincia de Wardak al este del centro de Afganistán, ataron a los/as funcionarios/as y buscaron guerrilleros entre los heridos. Es posible que él no vaya a pedir disculpas tan rápidamente por este crimen de guerra estadounidense como hizo al expresar su preocupación por el ataque aéreo mandado por el comandante alemán.

En el Día del Trabajo (en EEUU) el enfoque de la administración de Obama fue su iniciativa sobre el cuidado de salud. Pero Afganistán continuaba intercalándose en los titulares y columnas de opinión de los periódicos. A diferencia de su posición crítica hacia la intervención en Irak, el Presidente Obama ha descrito la intervención en Afganistán como “necesaria” y ha tratado de justificarla políticamente.

Los militaristas, los comandantes del Pentágono y el ala derechista del Partido Republicano que atacan a Obama por todo lo demás, lo respaldan en la guerra en Afganistán, siempre y cuando él mantenga su posición de que la guerra es necesaria e intensifique la intervención militar estadounidense. Contrariamente, el sentimiento popular, especialmente entre los/as demócratas y los/as que votaron para Obama, es que Estados Unidos debe encontrar alguna manera de retirarse de esta guerra. Esto significa que la administración debe intensificar la guerra y enajenar sus partidarios/as o debe rehusar intensificar la guerra y hacerse el chivo expiatorio por “la pérdida” de Afganistán a los/as afganos.

Quienes se oponen a la guerra desde afuera de la administración deben desenmascarar los mitos principales que son usados para justificar la guerra.

Primero, el ataque del 11 de septiembre es constantemente usado como pretexto para la invasión estadounidense de Afganistán. La verdad es que no había ningún militante del Talibán ni ningún afgano entre los que presuntamente fueron los responsables de esa acción.

El segundo pretexto principal es que la intervención estadounidense y europea está mejorando de alguna manera las horribles condiciones que enfrentan las mujeres de Afganistán. La verdad es que el gobierno de ocupación de Afganistán ha pasado leyes que reducen las protecciones ya escasas para las mujeres y las hace esclavas virtuales de sus maridos bajo la ley. Los únicos avances verdaderos para las mujeres sucedieron bajo el gobierno secular y pro-socialista durante los años 1978 a 1992. Durante esos años la CIA hizo todo lo que pudo para derrocar al gobierno legítimo, venciendo al final.

El tercer pretexto es que “las democracias” del mundo están trayendo democracia a Afganistán. La elección flagrantemente fraudulenta, montada bajo una ocupación, está actualmente desenmascarando este mito.

En los Estados Unidos, una serie de manifestaciones han sido llamadas para tener lugar a principios y mediados de octubre para protestar la presencia continua de los Estados Unidos y la OTAN en Afganistán. Para la gente progresista en este país, estas acciones son el lugar donde deben estar.

Correo electrónico: jcat@workers.org

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